DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 430 170 CG 029 238

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TITLE Key Roles in the Revolution of Work.
INSTITUTION Canadian Career Development Foundation, Ottawa (Ontario).
ISBN ISBN-1-894266-14-5
PUB DATE 1999-01-00
NOTE 55p.; Originally published in French, "Roles-cles des dans la Revolution du Travail." Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Canadian Guidance and Counseling Association (Montreal, Quebec, Canada, 1998).
AVAILABLE FROM Canadian Career Development Foundation, 202-411 Roosevelt Ave., Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K2A 3X9; Tel: 613-729-6164; Fax: 613-729-3515; e-mail: ccdffcac@magi.com
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Career Counseling; Career Development; Counseling Techniques; *Counselor Role; *Employment; Foreign Countries; *Trend Analysis

ABSTRACT

At the height of the work revolution and its great social challenges, career development and employment counseling specialists have essential key roles to play in order to support the socioeconomic growth of our community. This book suggests four pro-active key roles for the profession. This recommendation is based on research conducted over the past decade with 1,500 adult workers facing career transition. These key roles, which are relevant to working with individuals or groups, include: counselor of being-doing link; counselor in real and virtual career; counselor in managing vocational chaos; and a role encompassing broadly the counselor in the social guidance of work. This paper is addressed to all career development and employment counseling specialists. It encourages them to be more directly involved in macro sociopolitical decisions. It also endeavors to guide them to be more efficient and relevant in their delivery of services to clients in today's work revolution. (Contains 17 references.) (Author/MKA)

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DANIELLE RIVERIN-SIMARD

KEY ROLES IN THE REVOLUTION OF WORK

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REVOLUTION OF WORK

Danielle Riverin-Simard

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WORK

Keynote address presented to career development and
employment counselling specialists

Canadian Career Development Foundation
Ottawa
1999

Riverin-Simard, Danielle

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ISBN 1-894266-14-5

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Legal deposit (Ottawa), first trimester

Originally published in French, Rôles-clés dans la révolution du travail (Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1998)

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INTRODUCTION [1]

We are in the midst of a work revolution (Gilmore, 1998). Futurists foresee a post-market (Rifkin, 1995) or post-job (Bridges, 1994) world, characterized by a breakdown of the current configuration of jobs and careers and an end of work. They even go so far as to question the continued existence of careers (Hall, 1996).

The career counselling profession arose in response to a specific period in the social history of work. Work, as we know it, is a relatively recent reality. In the Middle Ages, the European social structure was established according to religion. Time was structured by church bells (Sue, 1994) and hope was the world's ultimate aim. Then, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, religion gave way to work. Until recently, work has been as powerful as religion once was. But now, on the brink of the twenty-first century, work no longer represents the dominant structuring of time for human beings.

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[1] This paper was presented as a keynote address at the 1998 annual conference sponsored by the Canadian Guidance and Counselling Association (CGCA), in collaboration with L'Ordre professionnel des conseillers et conseillères d'orientation du Québec (OPCCOQ) and the Quebec Personnel and Guidance Association. The theme of the conference was "Engendering hope through counselling." The event was hosted by Concordia University in Montreal, Québec.

As a result, the following question must be considered: If work as we know it is disintegrating, does this imply that the career counselling profession must also disappear? Indeed, today's society seems to want to disregard career development and employment counselling specialists. An enormous number of career counselling positions have been eliminated in public and para-public organizations in recent years and many private consulting offices are encountering increasing difficulty in recruiting clients.

This time of apparent threat is precisely the right moment for the career counselling profession to be proactive, however. In order to be proactive, we must be more aware of the great importance of career development and employment counselling specialists' key roles in the twenty-first century.

The work revolution is expected to evolve in ways that greatly differ from old patterns. This explains why several futurists describe the work revolution in diverse ways, often using the prefix "post." Among such designations we find Bridges' post-job era (1994), Rifkin's post-market era (1995), Habermas' post-modernity (1987), and Lyotard's post-civilization (1984). These futurists all agree with the following statement: In times of great change, the principle actors in a revolution are individuals. We must bear in mind that counsellors have as their clients these principle actors! Counsellors have, I believe, very serious and specific key roles to play in the work revolution.

For several years, my research has considered adult career development according to classic variables such as age group, social class, and personality type. This work has led to the publication of four books, namely *Phases of Working Life* (1988), *Careers and Social Classes* (1991), *Career Transitions: Choices and Strategies* (1995), and *Work and Personality* (1998).

My aim in this paper is to propose four proactive key roles. These propositions are based on my recent research, which has been conducted on 1000 adult workers and, more recently, on 500 other adults whose careers have been characterized by discontinuity.

The key roles I propose are associated with individuals or groups: Counsellor of the Being-Doing Link, Counsellor in Real and Virtual Careers, and Counsellor in Managing Vocational Chaos. These key roles are combined with a role encompassing society as a whole: Counsellor in the Social Guidance of Work.

Based on the results of my research, this paper suggests that a shift is needed within the career counselling profession in order for it to better adapt to the realities of the twenty-first century.

This shift does not merely imply changing counselling techniques and strategies while maintaining the same professional perspective. Rather, I am suggesting that the interventions that career development and

employment counselling specialists use must evolve from a new, proactive and trans-historical perspective. This approach is, I believe, much better adapted to the demands of the current work revolution and to the unknown realities of the twenty-first century.

COUNSELLOR OF THE BEING-DOING LINK

The first proactive key role which I propose consists of defining oneself as a "counsellor of the being-doing link".

In order to confront the work revolution, career counselling professionals must be situated beyond this revolution. I would suggest that assuming this first key role will enable career development and employment counselling specialists to overcome the current state of unpredictability. By defining oneself as a counsellor of the being-doing link, counsellors may transcend the unknown dimension of the future socio-economic world and, particularly, that of the new work practices proceeding from it. The use of primary terms, such as being and doing, will enable career development and employment counselling specialists to effectively highlight their core skills.

Although work as we have known it in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has come to an end, the doing-being

link continues to be central. This link is, and will always be, a fundamental characteristic of humankind. According to this perspective, the career counselling profession has an undeniable social relevance.

The definition of the key role of counsellor of the being-doing link is based on my research, particularly that which is outlined in my book entitled *Work and Personality*(1998). One of the conclusions in this book is that the association made between being and doing will have a central impact on vocational development. In situations of stress, individuals tend towards one of two opposite poles, depending on the links they make. This division between poles is intensified up to the age of 50, then gradually diminishes. These poles consist of two contrary vocational principles.

The first pole emphasizes the vocational principle: "I AM, THEREFORE I DO." Its opposite pole emphasizes, "I DO, THEREFORE I AM." The differences between these two poles are intriguing and they have important practical consequences in the daily interventions used by career development and employment counselling specialists. They must, therefore, be fully grasped in order for the career counselling profession to place themselves beyond, but also simultaneously at the heart of, the current work revolution.

The pole: I AM, THEREFORE I DO

According to my research, three of Holland's six vocational personality types (1997) share this principle. Namely, the artistic, enterprising, and social types adhere to this pole.

According to the principle, "I AM, THEREFORE I DO", the major source of vocational action when under pressure is self-definition — the identification of one's being. In other words, people who adhere to this pole believe that they must first distinguish their own characteristics, or clarify who they have become, in order to cope with a destabilizing economic context. They believe that only after defining themselves can they gradually act or interact with their surroundings. They consider their self-definition (I AM) to be the foundation, the mainstay, or the propeller, of their vocational acts (I DO).

Each of the three vocational personality types express their unique personal characteristics ("Who I am") when in situations of stress. For example, artistic personality types highlight their ability to express emotions or to make others enter their imagination. Enterprising personality types demonstrate their gregarious nature, their selling ability or their aptitude for convincing or leading people. Social personality types, emphasize their caring nature which helps them provide interpersonal assistance, draw others out of their isolation, and assist others in personal and vocational development. These

three personality types initially highlight the qualities of their being. For them, these characteristic qualities of their being make them act, enable them to accomplish things, and motivate them in vocational activities.

Individuals whose principle is I AM, THEREFORE I DO, generally dislike being required to submit quantifiable proof of their efficiency in the labour market (for example, number of clients served, length of meetings). They believe that being asked for tangible proof of their action attaches too much importance to what they produce and not enough importance to who they are. It runs counter to their vocational principle. In their opinion, demonstrating their personal assets — and their being — is in itself a guarantee that they will work efficiently. Therefore, they feel less obliged to provide quantified proof of their actions.

Although the results of their work may be well-known, they do not consider these results to be a confirmation of their vocational existence. One poet declared: *"I no longer want people to tell me that they appreciate the poetry I write* ["what I do"], *but that they appreciate who I am."* As illustrated here, the poet is mainly preoccupied by his being, not by what he has produced.

If these individuals are dismissed from meaningful employment, their first priority is to redefine themselves. In stressful situations, they particularly need to know who they have become. In situations of career discontinuity,

they need to redefine their being before they can resume their actions.

With clients such as these, career development and employment counselling specialists would be advised to employ interventions to reconcile them with their being and allow them to rediscover "who they are." This is a prerequisite. Only after this step is addressed can these individuals resume action.

The vocational principle I AM, THEREFORE I DO is shared by most career development and employment counselling specialists, who are of the social personality type. But what about the opposite pole, I DO, THEREFORE I AM?

The pole: I DO, THEREFORE I AM

A distinct category of people interviewed during my research demonstrate this opposite vocational principle when they are in situations of stress. This pole is represented mainly by individuals of Holland's conventional, realistic, and investigative personality types. I personally fall into this category.

When in situations of stress, these three personality types tend to emphasize what they produce rather than who they are. For example, conventional personality types highlight products such as administrative or financial reports and classification systems. Realistic personality types tend to demonstrate products such as machinery,

appliances or sophisticated equipment that they have created or repaired. Investigative personality types emphasize their research reports or the data they have collected relevant to a specific problem or phenomenon.

These three personality types initially emphasize the results of their occupational productivity. According to the I DO, THEREFORE I AM principle, these products are a guarantee of the characteristic qualities of their being. These products are considered the very foundation of their vocational definition.

The principle I DO, THEREFORE I AM implies that the work product (doing) primarily causes or reveals the characteristics of their being. This is the reverse of the first principle outlined. Regardless of the economic environment, those who subscribe to the I DO, THEREFORE I AM principle believe that they must first achieve a certain occupational productivity before realizing who they are (ie. before even identifying their own unique vocational existence in their socio-cultural context). According to this principle, occupational productivity — the work product — is the foundation for the continual redefinition of the self.

I DO, THEREFORE I AM is the dominant vocational principle of today's society. As we know, the labour market increasingly requires people to first submit proof of their occupational productivity before recognizing the personal qualities which make them suitable for a job.

If individuals who adhere to the I DO, THEREFORE I AM principle are suddenly dismissed from meaningful employment, career development and employment counselling specialists must first choose interventions which incite them to immediately react, accomplish, or "do" things.

Career development and employment counselling specialists must not employ the same interventions to individuals of opposite principles. Interventions which encourage individuals to speak of their emotions or experience must not be used, at first, with individuals who adhere to the I DO, THEREFORE I AM principle. Neither should interventions that encourage them to work on redefining their being be used, since this would be going against their vocational principle and its implicit chronology. Interventions which focus on helping people get in touch with who they are may be appropriate for clients discussed in the previous section (I AM, THEREFORE I DO), but are not recommended for people who adhere to the I DO, THEREFORE I AM principle.

In situations of stress, individuals who subscribe to the I DO, THEREFORE I AM principle need to involve themselves in activities before they can begin to get in contact with their being. Career development and employment counselling specialists must encourage these clients to undertake activities, even if they are still hesitant or in a state of shock. Appropriate activities

could include carrying out the preliminary steps of looking for a new job, taking short training courses, or engaging in leisure activities such as volunteering or handiwork. Only after carrying out activities, can these individuals proceed to redefine their being and proceed in their career development. One must bear in mind that, according to their vocational principle, it is the 'I DO' that causes or reveals the 'I AM'. Therefore, a priority is placed on activities which provide incentive to their being and not on the being which is revealed by their work products.

This priority may seem quite paradoxical to career development and employment counselling specialists who generally adhere to the opposite I AM, THEREFORE I DO vocational principle.

The I DO, THEREFORE I AM principle runs counter to the opinions of several authors. Bridges (1994), for example, states that individuals must no longer define themselves by what they do. He suggests that in so doing, people risk losing track of who they are. This statement may be quite accurate when applied to those who adhere to the I AM, THEREFORE I DO principle. However, it is inaccurate for individuals whose principle is I DO, THEREFORE I AM. The latter, must define themselves first and foremost by acting and doing. This attitude is coherent with the link which they inherently conceive between being and doing.

Strategies

Acting as a counsellor of the being-doing link means:

- ***becoming aware of one's own intuitive link between being and doing*** (i.e., of the link which spontaneously arises first in stressful situations). Career development and employment counselling specialists need to ask themselves whether their naturally occurring link corresponds to the I AM, THEREFORE I DO or the I DO, THEREFORE I AM principle.

- ***critically reviewing one's career interventions***. The aim of this review would be to identify which interventions principally refer to being and which mainly concern doing. It is important to adapt one's career counselling practice to the client's intuitive being-doing link (whether the client is an individual, group, or organization). Does the client adhere to the I AM, THEREFORE I DO or to the I DO THEREFORE I AM principle? If the client's leading vocational principle is unclear, I suggest that they be allowed to choose from the outset between interventions which either emphasize being or doing.

- ***having a greater knowledge of the developmental bipolarity of vocational principles***. Throughout our working life, and its many transitions, we progress

by highlighting one or the other vocational principle.

Career development and employment counselling specialists must help individuals become aware of their intuitive being-doing link. This link is, after all, a guiding principle for their professional attitudes.

- ***balancing one's career interventions by prioritizing one or the other of the two opposed vocational principles***. While the I AM, THEREFORE I DO and the I DO, THEREFORE I AM principles are complementary and essential to vocational development, they remain opposed. Accordingly, when one is active the other must necessarily stand aside.

  Career development and employment counselling specialists should be aware that a subtle chronological alternation between interventions related to each pole is ultimately essential to an individual's development.

Finally, acting as a counsellor of the being-doing link also means ***letting society know that career development and employment counselling specialists have an increasingly vital role to play in the twenty-first century***. The links between being and doing are trans-historical. They are essential to the mobility of human beings

throughout their lives and across periods of history — past, present, and future. By defining themselves according to fundamental trans-historical key roles — by acting as a counsellor of the being-doing link — career development and employment counselling specialists can assist their clients more effectively whatever outcome emerges as a result of the current work revolution. In doing so, career development and employment counselling specialists will be more able to "prove their worth" within the context of today's and tomorrow's social challenges.

COUNSELLOR IN REAL AND VIRTUAL CAREERS

A second pro-active key role which I propose is that of "counsellor in real and virtual careers". By adding the key role of counsellor in virtual career to their traditional specialization as counsellor in real careers, career development and employment counselling specialists will master a much wider range of possibilities foreseeable within the twenty-first century.

A "real career" consists of the continual realization of one's vocational meta-orientations (see below) in select employment settings, with wages measured by the market value of labour. Traditional paid employment and salaried/waged jobs are real careers.

While "virtual careers" also enable individuals to pursue their vocational meta-orientations within select activities, the realization of these orientations is remunerated according to post-market modes (i.e., with a virtual or social salary). Activities chosen for the realization of virtual careers include exchanges of labour that have long been prevalent in rural settings and are increasingly seen in urban "underground economies". In fact, futurists foresee the generalization of virtual careers, with unique forms of payment for those who wish to work in community services (Roustang, 1996; Rifkin, 1995).

A virtual career is a possible or potential career. It is generally seen as an alternative for a real career and represents a pro-active and positive way of conceiving periods of occupational discontinuity. A virtual career enables individuals to continue fulfilling their vocational meta-orientations. It encourages a feeling of coherence despite disruption and enables individuals to remain competitive in anticipation of an eventual return to the labour market.

Vocational meta-orientations

Each person, given the mere fact of his/her existence and the uniqueness of that existence, inwardly fosters vocational meta-orientations. Vocational meta-orientations are more or less explicit or conscious and they maintain a symbiotic relationship with the person's vocational identity and existential project/mission. They

are in harmony with one's vocational personality: its colour, richness and originality. Vocational meta-orientations reveal each person's deepest aspirations and ultimate aims.

Therefore, success in any phase of career transition presupposes that our vocational meta-orientations have been identified. Individuals' deepest aspirations serve as beacons lighting their path throughout their lifelong career transitions. Seen in this way, the occupation becomes a means rather than an end in itself. This does not diminish the importance of an occupation. It does, however, underscore that it is only one of several methods of reflecting one's vocational meta-orientations and of bringing those orientations to fulfilment.

The concept of vocational meta-orientations enriches and enlivens our daily work. It puts our dreams back in the foreground, using them as filters through which our current professional experiences can be analyzed.

Vocational meta-orientations enable individuals to protect themselves against environmental pressures which may act to detract from their life-work aspirations. They also stimulate people to determine or redefine their social and professional life/work projects and to work towards their realization, even in the face of obstacles and challenges.

Defining one's meta-orientations is central in both in real and virtual careers. Doing so implies much more than

choosing a job or career, however. Jobs and careers are merely possible means of achieving one's vocational meta-orientations. Diverse tasks, pertaining to very different vocational fields, can equally fulfill orientations. Therefore, the priority should be on one's vocational meta-orientations rather than on the selection of a job or career.

Futurists predict continued transformations in the nature of jobs and careers throughout the first decades of the twenty-first century. The increasing importance of identifying one's vocational meta-orientations in order to pursue a real or virtual career was evident in my recent research. Even when confronted by major integration and transition difficulties, individuals clearly assert the following:

Not knowing what you want
is much worse than not having it.

Such statements underline the crucial importance of defining one's vocational meta-orientations. The people we interviewed claim that, in today's unstable socio-economic world, not having identified their meta-orientations is worse than not having accomplished them. Career development and employment counselling specialists are trained and ideally positioned for helping people define their vocational meta-orientations.

Other elements of my research also underlined the importance of identifying one's vocational meta-orientations. For example, another predominant message expressed by people who were interviewed during periods of discontinuity is:

When you know what you want,
you don't waste as much time
between jobs.

Having identified their vocational meta-orientations, individuals are better equipped to choose activities between jobs that will advance the pursuit of their career. For example, after a period of anger following a lay-off, a 45 year old man became involved as a volunteer. While his new activities were quite similar to his previous work, the work environment and the philosophy behind it were quite different. With this additional experience, he continued to look for a job with increased self-confidence.

Those who were interviewed also expressed the following:

If we know what we want,
we always end up trying to obtain it
through free time activities.
Most importantly,

we're able to talk about our frustrations with our support network because we have clarity about what we are lacking.

My research reveals that, in periods of discontinuity, people's dreams, life/work projects and vocational meta-orientations are often the subject of their daily conversations.

People tend to feel compelled to specify whether the job they have either lost, sought, or got corresponds to their vocational meta-orientations. This tendency to always have one's orientations in mind is quite understandable. Each transition causes individuals to re-position and re-connect themselves with their vocational meta-orientations. This constant shifting keeps the orientations at the forefront. If their orientations are not defined and re-defined, people will often feel helpless and utterly confused in situations of discontinuity. They become overwhelmed by the frequency of change and discontinuities. For this reason, the role of the career counsellor is particularly vital in the current work revolution.

As part of my research, a workshop was conducted to identify people's vocational meta-orientations. The results would indicate that this identification far outweighs the selection of jobs or careers. People express their vocational meta-orientations according to their own

unique vocabulary. Defined as such, the orientations are a sort of vocational DNA.

The seven main steps employed in the workshop to identify vocational meta-orientations were: 1) drawing up a personal list of occupations that are personally intriguing or interesting; 2) classifying the occupations according to original criteria: 3) preliminary identification of the subjective reasons for the arrangement; 4) more thorough identification of the personal classification; 5) original categorization of the reasons for each classification; 6) subjective hierarchical ordering of the classified reasons and identification of the vocational meta-orientations; 7) making these vocational meta-orientations explicit -- distinguishing dominant and secondary aspects and emerging with unique statements of life/work purpose. Through this process, the workshop applies a global strategy to an ontological notion of being which is defined, according to certain existentialist philosophers (Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Sartre), as essentially a "being" project.

The workshop's seven step assists participants to identify their vocational meta-orientations based on the following principle: selecting a significant mode by extracting a unique list of occupations that are personally intriguing or interesting (Step 1) and reorganizing this representation of the external world in a strictly personal manner by classifying the professions according to original criteria (Steps 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6) in itself defines the vocational

meta-orientations. By drawing up a list of professions and classifying them according to original, subjective criteria, the person projects his/her idiosyncrasies of being onto the working world — perceiving that world, interacting with it and adjusting to it. This process, therefore, provides a mode of identification (or of re-identification) of his/her vocational meta-orientations (the dominant and secondary components which transcend the concrete reality of any particular occupation).

I have described this workshop in more detail in my book entitled *Career Transitions: Choices and Strategies (*workshop III.1). The text is available in both English and French and has been widely appreciated by participants from across Canada, as well as in France and Switzerland. The workshop will also be available on the Internet in the autumn of 1999, as an integrated part of the system entitled SAMI-DPS, published by Télé-université (Université du Québec).

The necessity of rendering one's social existence significant by means of vocational meta-orientations is relatively recent in history. It coincided with the need to exchange one's labour for pay in order to survive (Godelier, 1975). The need for vocational meta-orientations implies a very particular relationship with the community. Individuals must continuously promote their vocational meta-orientations and prove that their abilities can be useful to society. It is precisely within this very

particular relationship with economic realities that career development takes place.

In the post-market economy of the twenty-first century, individuals have to live a social existence determined by their vocational meta-orientations more than ever before. Their orientations give meaning to their social existence and to their life. By defining their vocational meta-orientations, individuals are able to develop a clearer understanding of the temporal continuity and integration of their career transitions. Most importantly, they have a more constructive critical view and will be more involved in the new social contract of the twenty-first century. If futurists are right in claiming that the work revolution will direct people towards both real and virtual careers, the role of career development and employment counselling specialists in society will become even more central and important.

Strategies

Acting as a counsellor in real and virtual careers means:

- ***helping people get involved in a virtual career when it is temporarily impossible to be involved in a real career***. By specifying their vocational meta-orientations — which are the foundations of both career types — individuals define their vocations

and give meaning to their social and global existence.

- ***mobilizing individuals who are the actors of the current work revolution.*** This mobilization would be a vast movement involving everyone in the community, whether the dominant careers during the first decades of the twenty-first century are real or virtual.

If career development and employment counselling specialists add the role of counsellor in virtual careers to their traditional role as counsellor in real careers, they will be positioned more strategically for current and future realities. Planning virtual careers is essential to a successful social contract in the twenty-first century. Counsellors in virtual careers will be the key specialists of this new contract.

COUNSELLOR IN MANAGING VOCATIONAL CHAOS

My colleagues in the profession often ask me how we can advise people concerning their life/work future in the midst of a work revolution? Many factors are unknown. Our society is undergoing unprecedented transformations of every kind, nature and level. No one can escape this revolution — and some say that this is only the

beginning. Some predictions tend toward pessimism, foreseeing civil revolts against political and economic powers. Other predictions are more optimistic. These speak of a generalized freedom from imposed work and of a true democracy (Touraine, 1994) that is more participative than in the past (Racine and Sue, 1992).

But the question remains: How can we help individuals plan their life/work future when the outcome of the current work revolution remains relatively unpredictable?

The third key role that I propose is that of counsellor in managing vocational chaos ([2]). This role refers to vocational invariants that are situated beyond the unpredictable nature of the current work revolution.

The key role proposed here is based on some surprising results of my research, which I wrote of in my book *Work and Personality*. Among the very confused and disordered career paths of the individuals who were interviewed, certain invariants were nevertheless

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[2] Chaos, in this context, means the overdominating and constant state of relative instability which is underlined by stability laws. Crisis, on the other hand, refers to an immediate and temporary state of instability within a normal continuous state of relative stability. The aim of crisis intervention is to overcome this instability, by postulating that the normal state is relative stability and that it can be expected to return sooner or later. The chaos intervention, which I am presenting here, postulates constant relative instability — a state of turmoil of the person and the context. In chaos interventions, we have to forget about constant relative stability. The aim of chaos interventions is to participate in development by focusing on select stable lines which govern the normal human relative instable state. Examples of lines include continuous evolution, the vocational personality and the different phases of questioning in people's working life (constantly alternating between questioning about vocational finalities and vocational modalities). These important lines are, in my opinion, some of the vocational invariants which we must consider as our foundations. This normal state of relative instability and turmoil unfolds within a context which is also instable. However, this relatively unstable context is, in my opinion, also managed by stable laws. In chapter 12 of my book, "Work and personality", I write more extensively about the law of social chaos.

detected. While observing these constant elements within such discontinuity, I was reminded of Gleick's (1987) Law of Chaos and of the statements of some philosophers on disorder and instability.

Gleick's Law of Chaos describes the existence of an undeniable order and structure within natural disorders. Gleick (1990) points out that adherents of chaos were initially surprised to discover that they regularly observed disorder and instability, since scientific tradition has always sought to elaborate laws (physical or not) based on stability. For example, Gleick maintains that classical geometrical forms are straight lines and plans, circles and spheres, triangles and cones. They represent a powerful abstraction of reality and have inspired the Platonician philosophy of harmony. They enabled Euclides to elaborate a geometry that has lasted for two millennia — the only geometry most people ever learn. Euclides provided us with many books outlining specific mathematical formulas proceeding from abstract theories. However, according to chaos specialists, these works cannot capture complex and chaotic structures.

Chaos specialists faced much skepticism until people experienced chaos in fields such as physics, biology, and chemistry. These experiences revealed the paramount importance of studying chaos — of studying the stable structures within instability and disorder. At present, science accords considerable credibility to this law. Today, fewer scientists define chaos as an absolute

instability. Now, studies of chaos try to discover the hidden order within disorder, to establish a better relationship with hazards, and to propose a new understanding of what unpredictability really is.

Although the theory of chaos has only been fully acknowledged for several decades, it evolves from much older philosophical conceptions of order and disorder. Lachelier (1992), for example, integrated the works of several philosophers on the subject. They suggest that disorder, far from being incomprehensible or disruptive, could very well be a means of expressing a reality whose structure is still unknown.

Being mindful of chaos theory enabled us to observe certain invariants underlying the ever-present instability in vocational evolution when we conducted interviews. I believe that these invariants help us to identify hidden order within vocational disorder, to establish a better relationship with hazards in life and at work, and to propose a new understanding of unpredictability in careers. Accordingly, these invariants serve to clearly distinguish vocational instability or chaos from coincidence, or the absence of structure.

I discovered four major invariants in my research that will enable us, I believe, to better carry out our key role as counsellors in managing vocational chaos. However distressing it might seem, vocational chaos can be

managed and mastered, particularly with the knowledge of these invariants.

The relative stability of adult vocational personality

The relative stability of adult vocational personality is the first invariant which was revealed in my research.

My work indicates that adult vocational personality is relatively stable throughout the years, with one major exception. In contrast with other studies (Riverin-Simard, 1998), I noted an integration of opposites within individuals' personality towards the end of a their working life. In this way, the situation is completely different at the end of a career and early retirement. At this point, individuals begin to integrate vocational elements that they had previously rejected during their working life. Taking this into account, it is recommended to pay special attention to career reorientations occurring in individuals of 50-60 years of age.

Throughout most of the career span, however, adult vocational personality is characterized by relatively stable occupational values, interests and preferences. It is, therefore, critically important to know and acknowledge one's vocational personality.

Thus, acting as a counsellor in managing vocational chaos means:

- ***putting emphasis on the person's vocational inner invariants.*** These invariants must not be put aside despite the unprecedented confusion in the working world.

  Futurists are relatively homogeneous on how they suggest we prepare for the major work transformations of the twenty-first century. For example, most claim that we must be creative, flexible, enterprising, multi-skilled and efficient. They suggest that we must create our own jobs, sell our skills, and know how to interpret market transitions. However, by focusing exclusively on the working world of tomorrow, these thinkers overlook essential human considerations. Even in ideal conditions, people would not be free to respond to all of these recommendations. People are constrained by the need to harmonize their actions with their authentic adult vocational personality. If this does not happen, they risk feeling an existential void which will have negative consequences — not only for themselves, but also for society as a whole.

- ***informing people of the limits of their flexibility.*** This means informing people of their multi-potentiality. While there is a wide range of

opportunity for each personality type, not all possibilities are appropriate. There is a limit beyond which individuals cannot go without betraying their true self. In fact, the people who were interviewed very clearly and frequently expressed the following:

Despite my good will and however hard I try,
there are some tasks
which I can absolutely not accomplish.

- ***enabling individuals to acquire a solid knowledge of their vocational personality in order to remain faithful to their being***. By taking into account the unprecedented transformations that characterize today's working world, counsellors in managing vocational chaos must enable individuals to get in touch with their inner invariant (i.e., their vocational personality). This will serve to ensure continuity and harmonious, proactive adaptation to the work revolution.

The need to periodically redefine one's career orientations

My research revealed a second invariant, linked to the

need to periodically redefine one's career orientations ([3]). The knowledge of this invariant can help counsellors managing vocational chaos to be more efficient in their role.

In times of career discontinuity, people tend to engage in two different types of questioning. My research revealed that people constantly alternate between these two different ways of questioning themselves.

On the one hand, individuals question how they will achieve their career orientations. In an effort to realize their personal goals, individuals often wonder whether they should change employers, create their own company, join a professional association and/or pursue professional development/training.

On the other hand, individuals also question the very nature of their career orientations. Whether they brought about success or failure, their previous career orientations may have become dimmer, outdated, and obsolete. When this occurs, individuals feel compelled to question themselves. These periods of questioning are both distressing and, at the same time, critical to their development.

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[3] Career orientations are specific to real careers, and not necessarily to virtual careers. Vocational meta-orientations, however, encompass both real and virtual career orientations.

There are many moments in people's vocational life when their only orientation is that of seeking new orientations. This is entirely normal. In such situations, reintegrating into the working world or selecting associative activities becomes a very complex process.

Therefore, acting as a counsellor in managing vocational chaos also means:

- ***informing individuals of the predictable movements within their career, such as this constant shift between the two types of questioning.*** It particularly means informing individuals of this invariant and periodically recurring need to redefine their career orientations.

The continual evolution of one's relationship with temporality

A third invariant revealed in my research is the continual and relatively predictable evolution of one's relationship with temporality (i.e., one's personal meaning of being related to time and changing across time). The development of a real or virtual career takes place within an ever-changing subjective relationship with temporality and within the individual's personal developmental time line. This changing relationship translates into non-hierarchical phases of questioning in people's working life. These phases, which are further articulated in my

work entitled, *Phases of Working Life* (1988), include the following:

- seeking a promising path;
- grappling with an occupational race;
- testing new guidelines; and
- seeking the guiding thread in one's life history.

Each phase consists of a set of vocational questions. These shifts occur because people are regularly confronted with new roles and changing socio-economic contexts. Most of all, people have to go through periods of vocational questioning on diverse subjects. These subjects differ across time, according to one's social class (Riverin-Simard, 1991) and by type of vocational personality (Riverin-Simard, 1998).

In my book, *Work and Personality*, we conducted a comparative study of work crisis intervention strategies and of failure, shifting, career reorientations, and transitions. We endeavoured to determine how different personalities achieve their career development over the lifespan. We observed that each personality corresponds to distinct singular visions of the working world, to different representations of the task at hand and most of all, to unique phases of questioning across the working life.

We concluded that these phases of questioning do not correspond significantly to social roles applied to different age groups. Rather, they tend to correspond to complex modes of re-appropriating one's temporality within continuous or discontinuous career paths. Individuals are all inscribed in time. They are confronted with the need to give meaning to their birth, their aging and finally, to their eventual death. In a way, this is a trans-historical invariant. Whatever results from the current work revolution, human beings will always have to reposition themselves according to their changing relationship with temporality.

Each discontinuity incites people to reiterate or redefine their career orientations. People are also often confronted by a need to reposition themselves within their own temporality or periods in their life. In my research, individuals often referred to their age group in the following ways:

- I've just been fired [...] Fortunately, I'm only 30 so I can recover from it.

- I've just been fired. I'm no longer given the opportunity to demonstrate my skills [...] People interrupt me and ask how old I am [...] If you answer that you are over 50, people show you the door.

- I've just been fired [...] I have to go back to school [...], but the early 40's is a good age [...] All my experience will prove very useful.

This ever-changing subjective relationship with time is an invariant we can rely on in acting as counsellors in managing vocational chaos. According to my research, a refusal to acknowledge even informal and non-hierarchical phases of questioning in people's working life means denying one's evolution in time and, eventually, one's inevitable evolution towards death.

Consequently, acting as a counsellor in managing vocational chaos means:

- ***paying careful attention to the nature of individuals' vocational questioning, which springs from an ever-changing relationship with time.***

The need to perceive a vocational time frame

My research revealed a fourth invariant, which is somewhat more difficult to explain. It too can help career development and employment counselling specialists in their task of managing vocational chaos, however. This invariant is linked to the need to perceive a vocational time frame that is sufficiently extensive for individuals to plan the continuation of their vocational evolution.

This is especially crucial for people who have trouble perceiving a future time frame, such as those who suffer from fatal diseases or who experience a strong feeling of finitude. In such cases, my research suggests that individuals re-appropriate a necessary time frame for defining their career orientations, either by fantasizing about a symbolic immortality or believing in a real one. In order to develop vocational meta-orientations, one must consider the distant future as significant, somehow imagining its presence. This is not synonymous with denying death.

If individuals fantasize about continuation after their death, they expand their time frame. With this expansion, they will be able to define new vocational meta-orientations which continue beyond their biological path. In fact, in different philosophical theories relating to the question of finality, it is generally acknowledged that envisioning this time frame is necessary for making plans for the future (Riverin-Simard, 1991). In *Careers and Social Classes*, I explain in detail this phenomenon of fantasizing a distant future for the continuation of the vocational evolution of people who experience a strong feeling of finitude.

Accordingly, acting as a counsellor in managing vocational chaos also means:

- ***being aware of the invariant need to perceive a vocational time frame which is large enough for making career plans and defining vocational meta-orientations.***

Summary

The principle vocational invariants which were revealed by my research are the following:

1. the relative stability of the adult vocational personality;

2. the need to periodically redefine one's career orientations;

3. the continuous evolution of one's relationship with temporality and the non-hierarchical phases of questioning in people's working life; and

4. the realization of evolving perceptions of finitude and the need for a real or fantasized time frame for achieving career plans and pursuing vocational meta-orientations.

Acting as a counsellor in managing vocational chaos means:

- ***relying on vocational invariants in order to help individuals achieve a greater awareness of their own personal invariants and of their own underlying elements of stability within the work revolution.*** In short, counsellors must help individuals manage their own unique vocational chaos more efficiently.

An awareness of vocational invariants helps individuals to manoeuvre through periods of occupational discontinuity and to plan their vocational future in spite of transitions into and out of the labour market. The work revolution, which is expected to bring about a post-job/post-market era, obliges each person and group, to manage their own vocational chaos.

Therefore, the key role of counsellor in managing vocational chaos places career development and employment counselling specialists at the heart of the current work revolution. We must be aware of the necessity of fulfilling this crucial social role. I believe that it is the profession's responsibility to make the community aware of their ability to fulfill this role as counsellors in managing vocational chaos. This promotion will enable counsellors to reach a greater number of clients and, most importantly, assist clients to

better manage their personal career development within today's complex socio-economic context.

COUNSELLOR IN THE SOCIAL GUIDANCE OF WORK

The fourth key role which I propose is perhaps my most personally significant — the macro-collective role of the "counsellor in the social guidance of work". Career development and employment counselling specialists are the privileged witnesses to the appearance of new work practices. They have an "inside view" and, because of their function, they are among the most appropriate practitioners to reveal to society the new ways that individuals structure time.

Today, individuals, groups, and organizations need career development and employment counselling specialists more than ever. But society, as a whole, is also in need. The key role of counsellor in the social guidance of work enables us to identify new work practices. If we neglect it, we risk missing a historical "rendez-vous". Society has to acknowledge the new dominant periods underlying old modes of structuring time. This task of highlighting new dominant periods means revealing the new social structure that these new periods carry with them.

In short, acting as a counsellor in the social guidance of work means:

- ***helping identify the forerunning signs of a new emerging social order***. Identification of these signs is necessary in order to direct, as much as possible, the social and economic evolution of the community towards an optimum personal and occupational standard of living for citizens.

Career development and employment counselling specialists can provide very significant data which will complement that which is produced by other specialists (ex. economists, sociologists). Counselling individuals and groups reveals experiences that can be very different from what we might expect. This is apparent when the image of the "typical worker" is articulated by economists and sociologists. The clients of career development and employment counselling specialists reveal social, cultural, and political correlates and transformations.

The typical reaction of business people to my research reveals the uniqueness of the potential macro-social contribution of career development and employment counselling specialists. It was a pleasant surprise for me when my book *Work and Personality* was nominated and received a second place standing for the Quebec business book prize (The Cooper and Lybrand's Award). Business people recognize the necessity of learning more

about new work practices and they acknowledge that society has an urgent need to understand emerging trends. According to the business community, those who work directly with individuals and/or groups (such as career development and employment counselling specialists) will be the first to know about these trends because they are in a privileged situation. Business people claim that, at the moment, there is missing data — the current work revolution leaves a disturbing void. Old work practices are disappearing, but new work practices are not yet identified. They rightly question how they can efficiently intervene in managing human resources without this new knowledge.

Due to the privileged relationships they have with their clients (individuals, groups, and organizations), career development and employment counselling specialists have much to offer society. In particular, they can give indications concerning the new emerging social orientation of work. Career development and employment counselling specialists are thereby most apt to contribute to the continual redefinition of the social orientation of work.

In what concrete ways can counsellors contribute to this continual redefinition of the social guidance of work? In what concrete ways can we act as counsellors in the social guidance of work? There are, of course, diverse ways to proceed. There is one, however which I believe can be realistically carried out. As professionals, we can

contribute to the social guidance of work by expressing critical recommendations that highlight the positive effects and prevent the negative consequences of new emerging trends. In order to do so, we must first collect and provide rigorous indices of new work practices, and new ways of structuring time for individuals and groups.

The qualitative work orientation indices

I suggest that career development and employment counselling specialists develop annual qualitative work orientation indices. This is a concrete and feasible task. In order to achieve this macro-social role, however, the mobilization of all career development and employment counselling specialists would be required. Leaving such a responsibility to a single work group, however capable it might be, is not viable.

The qualitative work orientation indices that career development and employment counselling specialists would provide could include:

- citizens' occupational standard of living;
- behaviour while looking for a job or offering a job;
- different emerging work modes;
- emotive reactions towards these new work modes;

- free activities which are carried out while working or during a period of absence from the labour market;

- reactions of survivors in organizations;

- records of individual or collective lay offs;

- the implication of voluntary work.

These indices would also be illustrated by typical case studies.

Every year, when career counsellors meet, there should be a public report and a press release to publicize the qualitative work orientation indices.

I have elaborated a work plan and schedule for the publication of such annual qualitative work orientation indices. I believe that if career counsellors were to initiate such a project, an initial publication of qualitative work orientation indices could be produced within 24 months. According to this schedule, all career counsellors would be consulted at least five times:

- twice during the first year: I suggest that in September, counsellors would be asked to approve the preliminary contents of the indices to be produced annually and, in June, to produce a prototype of indices which would be forwarded;

- three times during the second year: In September, data would be collected on the indices; in February, a preliminary version of the official public report and press release would be distributed for review; and, in April, final approval of the official public report and press release would be sought.

According to this schedule, a working committee would be created, with its members appointed by professional associations representing career counsellors. This committee would be responsible for the conception and validation of the indices. It could equally be responsible for securing funds to ensure a successful completion of the project.

Society needs such qualitative work orientation indices in order to elaborate its economic and social policies. Clients, in particular, need career development and employment counselling specialists to make the community aware of the positive and negative consequences of new work practices. In my opinion, if the profession does not assume their macro-social role, it will be left to representatives of specializations who will give an incomplete interpretation of the reality of work.

In order to act as counsellors in the social guidance orientation of work, I suggest we transform a small part of our practice into a macro-social contribution. In my opinion, we have an obligation to do so because we are the privileged witnesses of the new emerging work

practices. Many social groups would be very attentive to the annual presentation of qualitative work orientation indices. For example, unions, community groups, the Employers' Council, and government departments (such as the Department of Labour and Human Resources Development Canada) would benefit from it.

Through their development of annual qualitative indices, career development and employment counselling specialists would achieve a much more prominent social status which, in turn, would be an important means of promoting the profession. In today's competitive context, no profession can afford to ignore promotion — career development and employment counselling specialists are no exception to the rule. Through the annual publication of qualitative work orientation indices, career development and employment counselling specialists would increase their visibility significantly. Visibility is a factor supporting the creation of jobs for the profession. It means receiving a greater number and diversity of clients in private consulting. Assuming this key role also positions career development and employment counselling specialists to be central in socio-political decision-making. Ultimately, it ensures that the assistance they bring to every client is more relevant and meaningful in the context of today's work revolution.

CONCLUSION

The four pro-active key roles I suggest are:

- counsellor of the being-doing link;
- counsellor in real and virtual careers;
- counsellor in managing vocational chaos; and
- counsellor in the social guidance of work.

I hope that these four key roles will contribute to the social influence of the career counselling profession. At the twenty-first century, knowing how to develop and manage careers is one of the most essential ways of insuring the social and economic evolution of our communities. And if career development and employment counselling specialists accept a slightly different conception of their roles, they will certainly be granted the prominent position and social role which they deserve in the new millenium.

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KEY ROLES IN THE REVOLUTION OF WORK

At the height of the work revolution and its great social challenges, career development and employment counselling specialists have essential key roles to play in order to support the socio-economic growth of our community. This paper suggests four pro-active key roles for the profession. This recommendation is based on research conducted over the past decade with 1,500 adult workers facing career transition. These key roles which are relevant to working with individuals or groups include: counsellor of the being-doing link; counsellor in real and virtual careers; counsellor in managing vocational chaos; and a role encompassing society broadly, counsellor in the social guidance of work.

This book is addressed to all career development and employment counselling specialists. It encourages them to be more directly involved in macro socio-political decisions. It also endeavours to guide them to be more efficient and relevant in their delivery of service to clients in today's work revolution.

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ISBN 1-894266-14-5

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